



NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR COLEEN J. SENG



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Inaugural study on gender equity released by Women's Commission

The Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission (LLWC) released findings of a study, showing that women are under-represented on local boards, commissions and task forces. The study, "A Place at the Table," gathered information on 219 boards in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Of the 2,453 positions on those boards, 1,720 seats (70.1 percent) were held by men, and 733 seats (29.9 percent) were held by women. The report is available on the Women's Commission City web site at www.lincoln.ne.gov. Free copies are available from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays at the LLWC, 440 South 8th Street, Suite 100. Citizens can also call the Commission at 441-7716 to request that a copy be mailed.

"According to the census, women make up 51 percent of the population in Lancaster County, so this under-representation is a very real issue," said Mayor Seng in a news conference held Feb. 12, 2004. "Society continues to make progress in the area of gender equity, but this study is another indication that there is still work to do. It is extremely important for women to have a place at the table where important decisions are being made that impact families and our community."

Bonnie Coffey, Executive Director of the LLWC, said the organization has embarked on a long-term project of providing women's leadership opportunities. The project includes the establishment of a talent bank.

"The Commission will recruit qualified women to complete the enrollment form, creating a reservoir of potential candidates," said Coffey. "LLWC will work with area businesses and organizations to make available candidate information in an effort to increase female representation on boards, commissions and task forces."

In its research, LLWC staff used annual reports, company web sites, the Nebraska Secretary of State's office and personal contacts. The survey asked how many seats the institution has on its board of directors, and how many of those are currently occupied by women. The information was collected from June through September of last year and may not be representative of the current composition or membership. The study looked at four categories – Lincoln's largest employers (for-profit), non-profit organizations, local government and elected offices. Of the 733 seats held by women, 61.3 percent were on not-for-profit boards, 28.6 percent were in local government, 3.8 percent were in elected office, and 6.3 percent were on for-profit boards. Other findings:

- Largest employers (for-profit) -- Of 349 possible seats, 46 or 13.2 percent were filled by women. Of the 58 companies sampled, four declined to participate in the survey or to answer the two survey questions.
- Non-profit -- The 72 boards surveyed included 1,271 possible seats. Of those, 449 or 35.3 percent were filled by women. The not-for-profit boards surveyed covered a wide variety of industries, including hospitals, human resources, professional agencies and charitable foundations.
- Local government -- The 67 City and County government commissions, task forces and boards included 675 possible seats. Of these, 210 or 31.1 percent were filled by women.
- Elected offices: The 22 elected boards included 158 offices. Of those, 28 or 17.7 percent were filled by women.

A follow-up comparison study is scheduled to be performed in 2006.

